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Monday 8 June 2009

Dear Sir,

I am writing concerning the headline, 'Giant mosque is given go-ahead', (Oldham Evening Chronicle, Thursday 4 June), which refers to news that the local council has approved planning permission for a mosque and Islamic Centre in Werneth, Oldham.

The article clearly states that the mosque and centre is a proposed four storey building with parking space for up to 20 cars.

We would question and object to the use of the adjective 'giant' to describe such a building. Not least given the fact that the building is not exclusively a mosque, but also comprises an educational and recreational centre.

Use of phrases such as 'giant' and 'mega' are commonly employed by those that seek to incite fear and loathing by referring to mosque building projects in terms that derisively suggest enormous proportions.

It is disappointing that the Oldham Evening Chronicle could not find more uplifting words to describe a project that appears to have earned the backing of many on the local planning committee.

We hope the OEC will, in future, be more careful with its choice of words, particularly given the recent electoral successes of the BNP in the European elections in Yorkshire and the North West region.

ENGAGE is dedicated to challenging misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims in Britain and contributing to community cohesion by eradicating the misconceptions that fuel hostility and alienation, and by ensuring a fairer representation of Muslims in the British media.

Yours sincerely,

Inayat Bunglawala  
Advisor on Research and Policy  
ENGAGE